

Regional AKIS Stakeholders workshop: Southern Europe

French AKIS – Brief context

Agricultural context

In 2020, there were 416,054 farms with an average size of 65 hectares. The major trends are the decrease in the number of farms (especially in livestock production), the growth in economic size, the increased specialization of farms, the decrease of family labour, and also the increasing age of farm managers. However, agriculture continues to play a major role in rural development and is still essential for the commercial balance of the country: the agri-food sector is the third largest net contributor to the French trade balance.

Main characteristics of the AKIS

There are many and diverse AKIS actors: public and private secondary and higher education institutes; public research institutes, in particular INRAE; farmers-led applied research institutes, the ITA; farmers based organisations; private companies (upstream and downstream sectors); and advisory organisations.

The AKIS is supported by strong national policies, with significant public funding and involvement of public authorities. Institutional arrangements encourage cooperation and knowledge flows: national coordination bodies (ex: CasDAR), multi-actor thematic networks, funding rules for calls for projects...

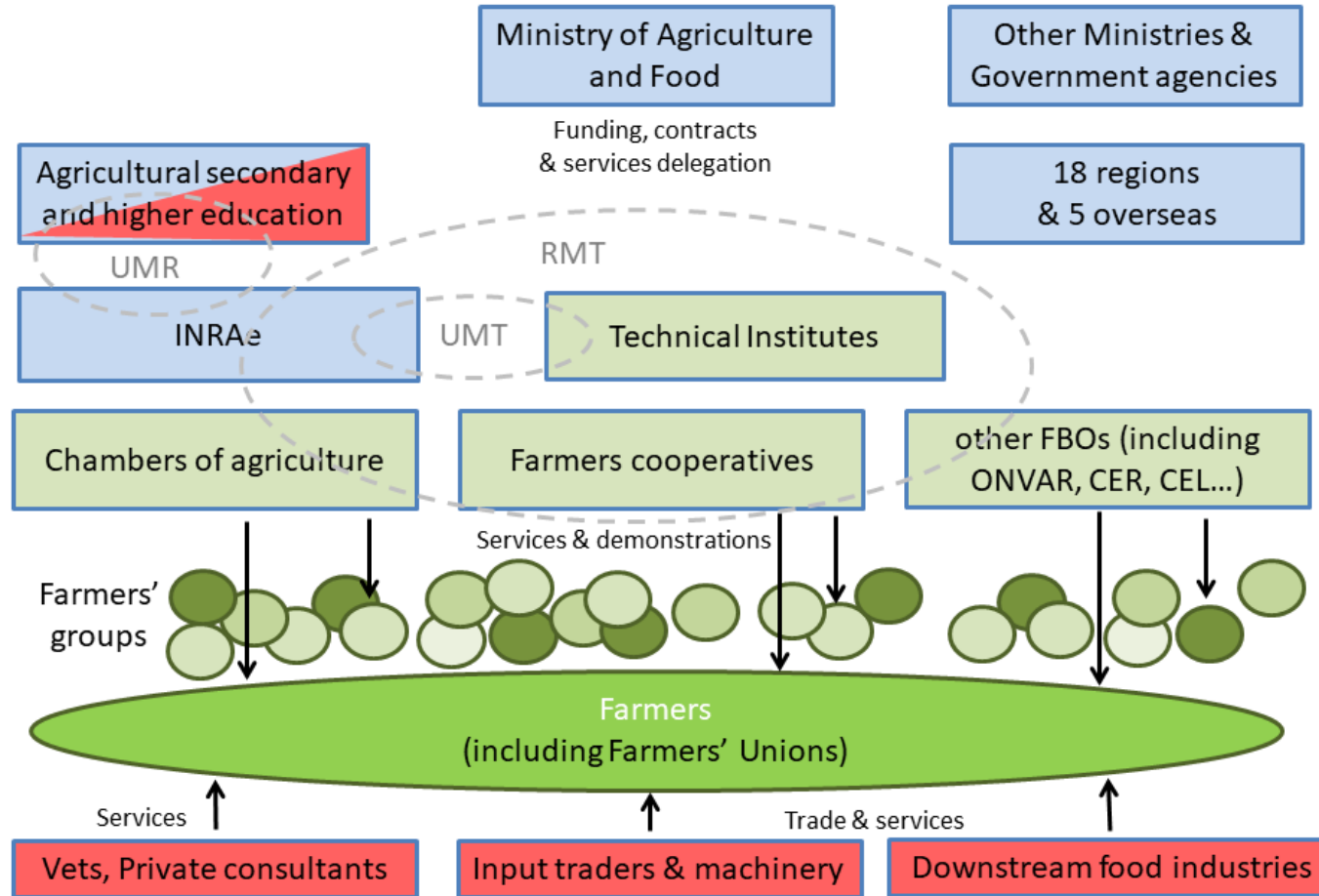
For the last 20 years, there has been a gradual shift from co-management between public authorities and farmers-based organisations to service delegation & contracting, and a gradual decentralization as well. During the same period, environmental and climate change issues have received increased attention and there has been a growing awareness of the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation to foster innovation and accelerate knowledge flows.

Advisory service provision

There are various providers of advisory services: chambers of agriculture, cooperatives and private traders, associations for bookkeeping and advice in business management, farmer-led associations and private independent advisors (still limited in number). The total number of public and private advisors is quite large, probably more than 15,000. The sources of funding for advisory services are diverse: besides the fees paid by farmers, foresters and local authorities, there are substantial public funds: a tax on unbuilt land allocated to the public assignments of the chambers of agriculture and the forest owners organization (CNPF); a tax on the turnover of farms, which feeds a fund for applied research and knowledge transfer (CasDAR); CAP measures for knowledge transfer, advisory services and innovation; and European, national, regional or local funds allocated to specific projects.



- AKIS diagram:



i2connect 2021, based on PRO AKIS 2014



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